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INFO RUEHBO/AMEMBASSY BOGOTA 0709  
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RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS 0327  
RUEHPO/AMEMBASSY PARAMARIBO 4283  
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E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/15/2016

TAGS: SNAR PGOV PINR KCRM GY

SUBJECT: GUYANA NARCO-RUMORS: ACETONE IMPORTS, STALLED HOTEL

REF: GEORGETOWN 300

Classified By: Political Officer Benjamin Canavan  
For reason 1.4(d)

¶1. (U) PolOff's recent conversations with prominent locals yielded noteworthy comments about developments in Guyana's narco-trade.

¶2. (C) PolOff spoke June 7 with Stanley Ming (protect), vice-chairman of the opposition PNC/R party and prominent Guyanese businessman. He is a large importer by Guyanese standards -- a licensed distributor of John Deere, Mitsubishi and Yamaha products. Ming has been a forthcoming interlocutor with post for several years. But he is a reluctant politician, preferring to discuss auto racing or his vision for Guyana as a South American transportation hub.

¶3. (C) Ming expressed grave concern that narco-criminals are using forest concessions as cover for cocaine processing labs. He argues that the labs are being set up in reaction to pressure exerted on Colombian operations. (Note: See reftel and 2006 INCSR for more detail on narco-trafficking infiltration of Guyana's forestry sector.) Ming said he is certain that large quantities of acetone (a solvent used in cocaine production) have been imported into Guyana in the past two years. He added that the remote forest concession for which leading narco-criminal Shaheed "Roger" Khan tried to obtain a permit in 2005 is not commercially attractive given its timber content, but does provide a very dense canopy -- ideal for concealing illicit activities.

¶4. (C) PolOff spoke June 4 with Glenn Lall (protect), publisher of the Kaieteur News. Lall has a sketchy past -- he translated a shoe trading business (and rumored involvement with alien smuggling) into a muckraking independent newspaper. He has a finger firmly on the pulse of Guyana's underworld, which serves his media enterprise well.

¶5. (C) Lall said that Prakash "Buddy" Shivraj has run into financial difficulties, which threaten to halt progress on his hotel project -- "Buddy's International Four Star Hotel". Shivraj is a Guyanese businessman widely acknowledged to be

involved with local narco-traffickers, at a minimum laundering their money. His main business venture appears to be a five-story bar/nightclub/restaurant/gym (the predictably named "Buddy's") in Georgetown.

¶6. (C) Lall said that Shivraj has tried unsuccessfully to tap local narco-criminals to obtain additional funds to complete the hotel's construction. The five-story concrete frame went up quickly in early 2006, but it still needs major interior and exterior work. Shivraj obtained neither bank financing nor the required permits for the hotel's construction. The 230-room project is situated next to the new stadium that will host Cricket World Cup (CWC) matches in Spring 2007. Failure to complete the hotel by then would surely render it financially unviable. This would also severely embarrass the GoG, which -- because of Guyana's dire lack of adequate hotel space for CWC -- looked the other way in allowing Shivraj to embark on the project.

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